



## **EASTERN SHORE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

### **MINUTES OF DISTRICT BOARD MEETING**

**Wednesday, September 15, 2021, 5:00 p.m.  
USDA Service Center, 22545 Center Parkway, Accomac, VA 23301**

#### **ATTENDANCE:**

**The following Board members, Staff and Partners were in attendance:**

Robin Rich-Coates- Chair, Nick Thomas- Vice Chair, Kyle Sturgis- Director, Ursula Deitch- Director, Edwin Long- Associate Director, Jaclyn Friedman- DCR CDC, Carmie Savage- District Manager, Julie Head- Education Director, Bill Savage- Conservation Specialist, Jenny Templeton- NRCS DC

**The following Board Members and Staff were unable to attend:**

Jim Evans- Director, Sands Gayle- Director, Rick Hall- Associate Director, Robbie Lewis- Associate Director, Bill Shockley- Associate Director, Chip Turlington- Associate Director, Norman Pitt- Conservation Technician

**CALL TO ORDER:** Robin Rich-Coates, Chair, called to order the September 15, 2021 District Board Meeting of the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District.

**MINUTES and FINANCIAL REPORTS:** Director Ursula Deitch made a motion to approve the August 11, 2021 meeting minutes and the August 2021 financial reports as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Nick Thomas, carried unanimously.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

**A. There was no Old Business presented.**

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. A. FY22 Cost Share Report:** Carmie presented the following report: Board approved carryover for Poultry BMPs from FY20 to FY21 and then to FY22 is \$1,002,440.78 in Ches Bay VACS and \$228,611.87 in OCB VACS. The FY22 VACS allocation is \$1,198,908 in Ches Bay VACS and \$583,598.00 in OCB VACS. Interest earned through August 31, 2021 totals in \$69.39 towards Ches Bay funding and \$16.27 towards OCB funds bringing the total of available FY22 funds to \$1,198,977.39 in Ches Bay and \$583,614.27 in OCB. Carmie reported the sign-up period from July 15 through August 18 was a huge success resulting in agronomic cost share requests totaling \$2,619,723.21 superseding last year's requests totaling \$2,325,737.90. The Ches Bay cost share requests total \$1,358,244.39 and \$1,261,478.82 in total cost share requests for OCB funds. Cost share requests for the

**APPROVED:** \_\_\_\_\_ **SIGNED:** \_\_\_\_\_  
BOARD CHAIRMAN \_\_\_\_\_ BOARD SECRETARY \_\_\_\_\_

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Whole Farm Approach Pilot Program were not included in these totals and will be presented for approval at the October Board meeting. Due to a potential conflict of interest, Directors Nick Thomas and Kyle Sturgis stepped out of the meeting.

Carmie presented the ranked cost share and/or Tax Credit requests for approval. She reviewed the ranking procedures of funding the High, Medium and Low hydrologic priority units with Highs funded first, then Mediums, then finally Lows and using the Cost Efficiency Factor (CEF) as a sorting tool, which is populated by DCR's tracking program, within each hydrologic priority unit. Since there is a significant amount of more funding available for the Ches Bay drainage areas, those requests were ranked first and then the OCB funds were ranked. Some had already met participant caps in Ches Bay cost share requests and requests were then adjusted in OCB funds. She also noted the District's secondary considerations state to fund New participants that are located in High hydrologic priority units first and two requests were found to meet that scenario so they were brought to the top of the ranking. She then allocates the funding in each funding basin starting at the top of the ranked order requests until the funding has been fully allocated and draws a line. Those in ranked order that fall below the line may move up once actual plantings are reported and/or money funding becomes available; therefore, the entire ranked order of requests were presented for approval for either cost share or tax credits contingent on funding. **Director Ursula Deitch made a motion to approve FY22 ranked order of cost share requests in both basins for either cost share or tax credits as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Robin Rich-Coates, carried unanimously.** Directors Nick Thomas and Kyle Sturgis rejoined the meeting.

After the cost share requests had been approved contingent on funding Carmie then reported the remaining need of funds to meet all requests total \$159,267.00 in Ches Bay funds and \$677,864.55 in OCB funds. She stated that the requests presented and the need in funding to meet the requests will reduce once actual plantings have been reported to the District. Carmie also noted that \$166,278.01 is available in FY22 Operational Funds in the line item *Cost Share Support* and there is a total of \$298,008.96 available contingency funds designated towards *projects directly related to soil and water conservation on the Eastern Shore*. If additional VACS funds cannot be obtained those funds could be used to fund practices. These funding options and VACS funding availability will be revisited after all actual plantings have been reported to the District to get a better idea of actual needs. There is one obligated FY21 poultry project, Board approved on 3/10/21, funded by FY20 VNRCF TA funds totaling \$204,007.71. **Director Nick Thomas made a motion to approve the FY22 Cost Share report as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Kyle Sturgis, carried unanimously.**

**B. DCR Assessment of SWCD Compliance in the FY21 Program Year:** Jaclyn Friedman, DCR CDC, reviewed the signed and dated FY21 Administrative and Operational Support Grant Agreement Assessment and the FY21 Cost Share and Technical Assistance Grant Agreement Assessment provided by DCR with the Board. The District was given an "A"

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on each assessment which is the highest score achievable for meeting grant deliverables. She shared her thanks with the board and staff on a job well done.

- C. VA Risk Management Services to SWCD:** A letter from the VA Department of Treasury was mailed to all SWCDs to remind SWCDs of the risk coverage currently in place or available to Districts through the Division of Risk Management. Jaclyn Friedman gave an overview of the services. SWCDs are covered for liability and fidelity and also have the option to obtain auto liability and property insurance/ workman's comp through the State. Carmie stated that the District participates in the auto insurance program. Jackie also noted that if the District needs a certificate of liability insurance for a special event, to contact her.
- D. District Letter of Support for grant A-NPDC is seeking:** The A-NPDC is applying for a grant to obtain funding for an agricultural rainfall study. The study's purpose would be to do a deeper dive into the seasonal rainfall patterns in Northampton and Accomack counties to better understand and respond to rainfall's impact upon crop planning and production. Included in the packets was a copy of the letter of support signed by Robin and submitted to the A-NPDC.

## **CORRESPONDENCE AND PRESS:**

- A. VESLT letter of thanks for support**
- B. "Northampton's Sturgis wins prestigious Young Farmers award" *Eastern Shore News*, 8/18/21 edition.** Robin recognized and congratulated Director Kyle Sturgis in winning the award.
- C. "Sturgis represents Eastern Shore with Excellence in Ag award" *Delmarva Farmer*, 8/20/21 edition.**

## **STAFF REPORTS:**

**District Manager Report:** Carmie Savage, District Manager, included a written report in the meeting packet and it is on file in the District office. She presented her report to the Board.

### **FY 2022 Cost Share Program:**

**Agronomic Update:** First Sign-up period deadline ended August 18<sup>th</sup>. The first sign-up period was successful and resulted in requests for cost share of cover crop, continuous no-till, long term no-till, nutrient management planning, and nitrogen application practices. Carmie ran RUSLE (soil loss calculations) on all cover crop and no-till practices as required by DCR. Carmie and Bill have been glued to the computers entering data for weeks but completed and all ranked data was presented to the Board under New Business. She created ranking spreadsheets making sure the FY22 State cap of \$150,000 was applied to all participants.

**Whole Farm Approach Pilot Program (WFA-1):** Three large growers are again enrolling all of their bay acreages into the program. One has a certified RMP and the

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other two participants have RMPs in the tracking module ready for staff and TRC review. There are 18 RMPs in total waiting for review.

**Poultry Update:** The seven approved poultry practices that have been Board approved to carry over to a 3<sup>rd</sup> year are reflected in the FY22 Cost Share Report under New Business as well as the one FY21 project.

**Accounting:** Daily accounting procedures and payroll ongoing.

**DLLC Webinar Panel Invite:** Kristen Hughes Evans, Chairman of Delmarva Land and Litter Collaborative (DLLC) and Kevin Cline, DEQ and Co-Chair of the innovative solutions workgroup suggested Carmie participate on a virtual panel focusing on water quality and the WIP on Delmarva. They asked that she discuss her experience (and that of the Virginia conservation districts) regarding implementing practices and the barriers encountered. They would like her to not only discuss resource challenges but also how Districts have successfully worked through these situations. An EPA representative will be speaking and James Martin, DEQ, will speak about WIP implementation progress, but then they would like to hear from folks on the ground who can speak frankly about what the opportunities and barriers are to meeting the WIP goals. Carmie asked if she could team with Nick Thomas and Jenny Templeton and they thought that was a great idea. Unfortunately the date of October 15<sup>th</sup> has been selected and neither Carmie nor Jenny are available but Nick Thomas is. Carmie is going to discuss obstacles and barriers prior to the meeting.

**District Website:** Carmie has been updating the District's website to keep it up-to-date- check it out!

**District Facebook Page:** Julie and Carmie have been posting to the District's FB page as time allows

**Webinars/ Trainings/ Conference Calls:**

- 8/24/21: Participated virtually in the FOIA training held at Graves Mt. Lodge facilitated by Alan Gernhardt, FOIA Council
- 8/25/21- Participated virtually in the Admin/ Ops training facilitated by Blair Gordon, DCR- SWCD Liason.
- 8/25/21- Participated virtually in the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training facilitated by William Crutchfield, VSU- Director, Small Farm Outreach Program, and Erin Ling, Department of Biological Systems Engineering- Extension Associate & DEI Panel
- 8/27/21- Norman and Carmie hosted a "zoom" pre-construction meeting on for one participant that has changed contractors. This meeting enabled the engineer to discuss the design, inspections and requirements with the new contractor and participant.

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**Conservation Specialist Report:** Bill Savage, Conservation Specialist, included a written report in the meeting packet and it is on file in the District office. He presented his report to the Board.

**BMP - Cost Share:**

- Ongoing: Bill has been assisting Carmie in Tracking with entering sign up data and looking up Farm & Tract info on the Fed computer.

**VCAP Site Visits & Inspections:**

- Contract 20-20-02: Bill conducted the follow up inspection on August 6<sup>th</sup> and the project is now back in compliance. Re-plantings looked good and coir log had been replaced.

**SL-15A No-Till Repayment:**

- Contract 20-16-0013: On July 15<sup>th</sup>, the producer requested to pull the remaining acres of a specific tract out of No-Till. This tract totaling 28.9acres has a calculated repayment in the amount of \$269.76. The producer paid the repayment in full on September 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Ground Water Committee Meeting:** No meeting held in August.

**VA Soil Health Coalition Quarterly Meeting, Aug 26th:**

- Amy Walker (DCR) gave a summary of the WFA-1 practice and how it works along with SL-3B strip cropping and NM bundled practices.
- The Coalition is looking at bundling ideas for existing VACS practices and potential new practices.

**VESLT Reports:**

- No monitoring reports this month.

**Training:**

- Bill attended the Graves Mountain training on August 24-26th. He enjoyed the weed identification and VCAP trainings. The food was excellent as well.

**Conservation Technician Report:** Norman Pitt, Conservation Technician, included a written report in the meeting packet and it is on file in the District office. He was unable to attend the meeting.

**Education Director Report:** Julie Head, Education Director, included a written report in the meeting packet and it is on file in the District office. She presented her report to the Board.

**Water Wise Home Program:** Karen Fetty, Hanover Caroline SWCD, has developed a Water Wise Home Challenge for homeowners to participate in. Homeowners select at least 3 challenge actions from 9 that are presented. When they have completed them they receive a yard sign or flag to display. Julie would like to do adapt some of the challenge actions to ones more personalized to the Shore and then do a trial run and see if it catches on. She presented a listing of prices for both yard signs and garden

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sized flags and suggested ordering 10 of each to start. The Board felt it was a great idea.

**Academy for Lifetime Learning** – 9/13/2021 – presentation on what a soil and water conservation district is and then a field trip to Mt. Nebo Farms to learn about agricultural BMPs.

**Cape Charles Christian School** – 9/9/2021 – seed germination and parts of a seed embryo. Cape Charles Christian wants to participate in all of the District programs.

**Northhampton County Public Schools** - new science curriculum so Julie is attempting to get the unit outlines so she can align District programs.

**New Teacher Luncheon for Both Accomack and Northhampton County Schools**-

The District hosted a luncheon for new teachers in both counties where Julie spoke about all of the many educational programs the District offers and are available at no cost.

**Girl Scouts in the State Park** – Saturday, 9/11 – career fair presentation. Sunday, 9/12 – STEM activity on seed dispersal.

**Outdoor Learning Spaces Planning Committee** – met with Cora and Hali to put together a plan to approach one of the elementary schools that currently does not have an outdoor learning space

**Upcoming:**

- 9/16 – Envirothon Zoom meeting
- 9/16 to 9/20 – out for wedding
- 10/11 10/22 – out for surgery
- 10/14 – Master Naturalist presentation on Soils – Ben Young, NRCS will be presenting this.

**PARTNER AGENCY REPORTS:**

**Department of Conservation & Recreation Update:** Jaclyn Friedman, DCR CDC, included a written report in the meeting packet and it is on file in the District office. She presented her report to the Board.

**ADMINISTRATIVE AND OPERATIONAL ITEMS:**

- **SWCD Audits:** Robinson, Farmer and Cox LLC has been awarded the auditing contract and hopes to begin audits as early as October and wrap up by the end of December.
- **Risk Management Services for SWCDs:** Jackie discussed this further during New Business.

**AG & COST SHARE ITEMS:**

- **Clean Water Farm Award nominations:** Local nominations are due by October 1. Grand Basin nominations are due to the appropriate CDC by close

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of business October 1. Nomination application packets should be submitted via e-mail and include the application, 1-2 page narrative and at least 6 PPT slides.

- **TAC & Subcommittees:** Technical Advisory Subcommittees are meeting and the TAC intends to have its work completed by December 1, 2021. Next and likely only full TAC is October 21 in Buckingham.
- **Chesapeake Bay Cover Crops:** Per recent guidance from the Chesapeake Bay Program, DCR is recording the number of cover crop acres grazed versus non-grazed in the Conservation Application Suite. As such, there is a new measure called "*Area of Cover Crop grazed (Acres)*" that is now required for completion on the SL-8, SL-8A, SL-8B and SL-8H practices. However, since the WQ-4 Legume Based Cover Crop specifically forbids grazing, there has been no change in the required measures for this practice.

**Ag Stewardship Act** -It is time to update District's ASA policy form for handling Ag. Stewardship complaints. Changes should be submitted using the form provided by VDACS but if there are no changes e-mail Darrel Marshall at VDACS.

**DCR Staff News:** Mr. Darryl Glover has accepted the position of DCR Deputy Director for Dam Safety, Flood Preparedness and Soil and Water Conservation. Recruitment for the next Director for the Division of Soil and Water Conservation is underway.

**DIRECTOR REMINDER: Conflict of Interest Act (COIA) Training:** The Code of VA requires once every two years locally elected officials to take COIA training. Most directors took this in 2019. The training is at <https://ethicswebinar.dls.virginia.gov/>. Select "Local elected officials or EDAs/IDAs" to complete the correct training to fulfill the training requirement as a District Director. There is no completion certificate, so Jackie recommends taking a photo of your completion screen as proof you completed the course. Let the clerk of the local jurisdiction know you have completed the training as well as your SWCD admin staff.

### **UPCOMING TRAINING AND IMPORTANT DATES:**

- **Advanced QuickBooks Training - Part 1 & Part 2**
  - **Sept 21: 10:00AM-12:00PM – Part 1.** Recommend attend both parts.
  - **Sept 23: 10:00AM-12:00PM – Part 2.** Recommend attend both sessions.
- **Sept 22:** VASWCD Quarterly Board Meeting 9:00 am Drury Plaza Hotel, 11049 West Broad Street, Glen Allen, VA. This will be an in-person meeting.
- **Sept 23:** VA Soil & Water Conservation Board Audit Subcommittee 9:00 am Drury Plaza Hotel, 11049 West Broad Street, Glen Allen, VA. This will be an in-person meeting.
- **Sept 23:** VA Soil & Water Conservation Board Meeting 10:00 am Drury Plaza Hotel, 11049 West Broad Street, Glen Allen, VA. This will be an in-person meeting.
- **Sept 30:** ASA form or confirmation email due to VDACS of how your district will handle ASA complaints
- **Sept 30:** SWCD's FY21 Annual Report due to CDC
- **Oct 1:** Clean Water Farm Award local and Grand Basin nominations due

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- **Oct 6:** Virginia Ag. BMP and Cost Share Program webinar 9:00 am - Required training for DCR Conservation Planner certification.
- **Oct 7:** VASWCD Annual Meeting/Training Planning Committee 9:00 AM Discuss training topics and prepare for the December virtual Annual Meeting.
- **Oct 19 & 20:** Virginia Resource Concerns (DNH, DWR, and DHR) Webinar - Required training for DCR Conservation Planner certification.
- **Oct 21:** TAC (Technical Advisory Committee) Meeting 9:30am-3:30 pm, at The B.A.R.N., 11851 West James Anderson Highway, Buckingham. Space limited so members are encouraged not to bring extra persons.
- **Dec 31:** Deadline for Locally-Elected Directors to complete COIA training.

**Eastern Shore Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D):** Edwin Long, Chair, gave a verbal report to the Board.

- ES RC&D has met and interviewed for the Projects Director position. Darcy Badon has accepted the position and should begin her new role October 1<sup>st</sup>. Caroline Bott will be working with her to transition Darcy into her position as she will be leaving the end of September.

**Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS):** Jenny Templeton, NRCS District Conservationist, gave a verbal report to the Board.

- The end of the federal fiscal year is September 30<sup>th</sup>.
- The last EQIP contract has been obligated.
- There were no CSP contracts obligated.
- Jenny is currently working on contract management
- Jenny will be out of the office from September 27 through October 25. Trent Howell, NRCS DC in Chesapeake will be covering the Shore during her absence.
- Ben Young, new NRCS Soils Con at Accomack Service Center will also be available and Jenny asked to please keep him in mind to help with upcoming event and activities.

**Accomack/ Northampton VCE:** Ursula Deitch, Northampton County Extension Agent, gave a verbal report to the Board.

- Due to COVID many scheduled events are now cancelled such as Farm Tour and Northampton County Ag Fair
- Ursula and Theresa Pittman, Accomack County Extension Agent, are currently working on this year's Ag Conference. It is tentatively scheduled for January 26-27, 2022 at ESCC. At this time, they are still planning an in-person event.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

Director Kyle Sturgis asked who was in charge of the maintenance of the District's signs found at the entrance of each county. He noticed the grass and weeds have grown up around the one in Northampton County. VDOT used to maintain the grass and staff will contact VDOT to find out more information. There was also discussion of the condition of

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the signs. The signs have not held up as they should have as they are only about six years old and it may be time to look into purchasing new signs, specifically metal signs that are reflective. Staff will look into all of this further and report back to the Board.

**The September 15, 2021 Board meeting was adjourned.**

*Meeting minutes were recorded by Carmie M. Savage*